

2026



**Attacks targeting
Al-Ashrafieh and Sheikh Maqsoud
Neighborhoods
08.01.2026**

Geographical Location:

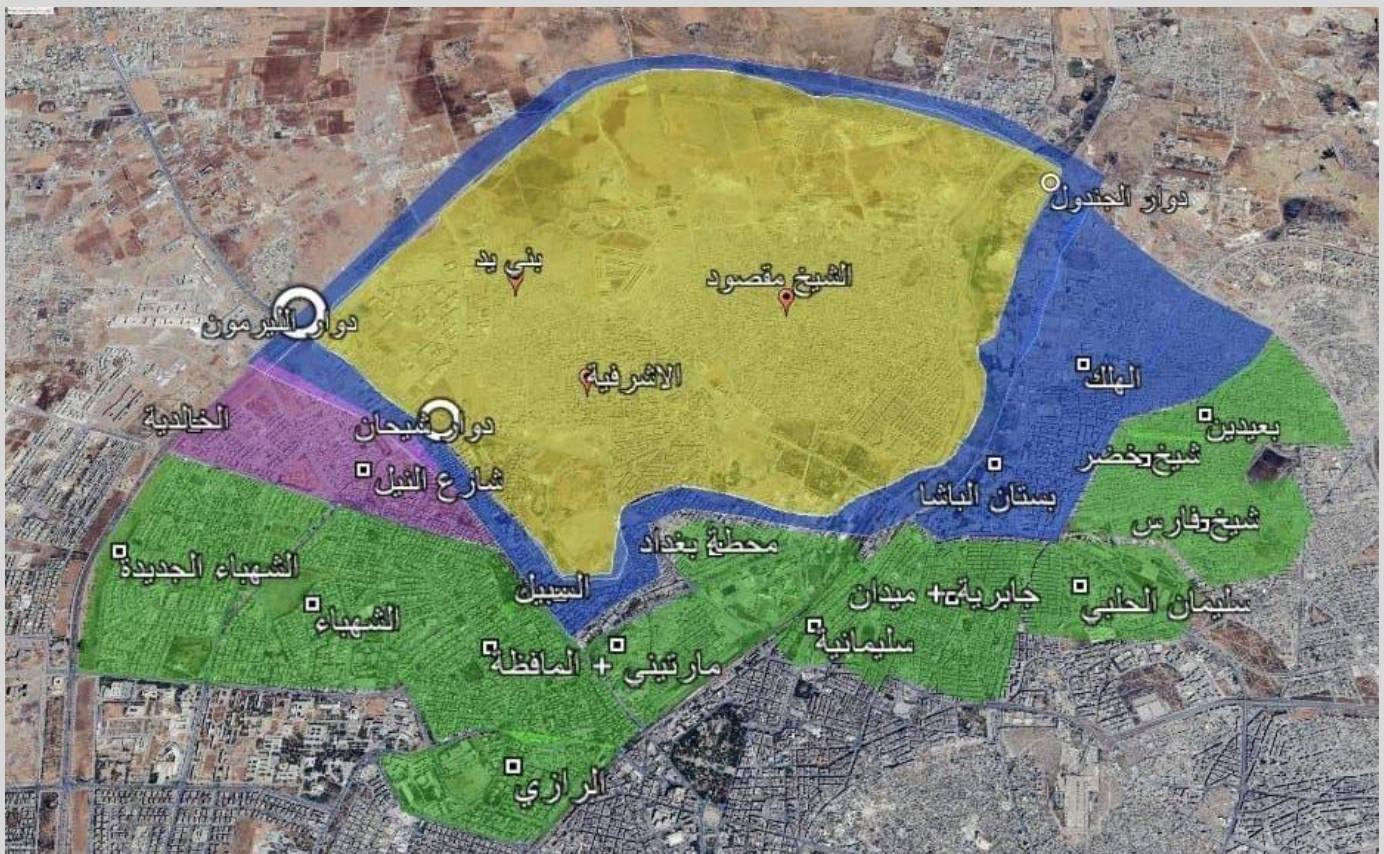
Sheikh Maqsoud neighborhood enjoys a unique strategic location in the northern part of the city of Aleppo. It is situated on an elevated hill, granting it wide oversight of the city and both banks of the Quweiq River. To the east, the neighborhood is bordered by the railway line that connects to Turkish territory, while to the south it is bordered by the Christian cemeteries and the French military cemetery.

Al-Ashrafieh neighborhood lies directly southwest of Sheikh Maqsoud, forming an urban extension of it. Together, the two neighborhoods overlook the Lairamoun industrial area and the Castello Road to the north and west, as well as the Youth Housing area. This gives them significant military importance due to their elevated terrain and control over vital routes within the city.

The high elevation of Sheikh Maqsoud is a decisive factor in the dynamics of the conflict, as it provides a tactical advantage for surveillance and control over the surrounding areas. This advantage has made both neighborhoods frequent targets of attacks, while at the same time turning them into strongholds of local self-defense by residents. Al-Ashrafieh also serves as a complementary area that reinforces this strategic significance.

Sheikh Maqsoud is the largest neighborhood in the city of Aleppo, with an area exceeding 4,000 square meters.

Al-Ashrafieh neighborhood, by contrast, covers an area of 14 dunams.



Armed factions attacking the Sheikh Maqsoud and Al-Ashrafiyah neighborhoods:

Military factions affiliated with Turkey and operating under the umbrella of the Ministry of Defense of the Syrian Interim Government in Damascus are carrying out attacks on the two neighborhoods using all types of heavy weapons, including heavy machine guns, rocket launchers, mortars, artillery, tanks, and armed drones. Meanwhile, the two neighborhoods are devoid of any military presence, with only Internal Security Forces present to maintain security and stability within the areas.

Armed factions attacking the two neighborhoods:

- **Division 60**, formed of hardline elements formerly affiliated with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). It is led by Awad al-Jassem, known as “*Abu Qutayba al-Manbij*,” a prominent HTS commander. The deputy commander is **Mudar Najjar**, a senior figure among factions active in northern Aleppo, most recently with the Levant Front, and originally from the city of Mare’.
- **Division 76**, formed by the Turkey-backed *Hamzat Division*, led by **Saif al-Din Bulad (Abu Bakr)**, who is listed under U.S. sanctions. By the end of 2025, the United Kingdom also imposed sanctions on this faction and its leader.
- **Division 72**, which includes fighters from several Turkey-backed factions, led by a former HTS commander known as “**Khattab al-Albani**.”
- **Division 80**, commanded by **Khaled al-Oma**+++++, a defected officer who led several factions during the Syrian crisis, most recently within the Syrian National Army.

Siege and deterioration of humanitarian conditions:

Violations in the Sheikh Maqsoud and Al-Ashrafiyah neighborhoods are not limited to direct violence; they have extended to a suffocating siege and severe restrictions on residents and on the entry of essential supplies, further deepening the humanitarian crisis.

Fuel crisis:

The two neighborhoods **have been subjected to an ongoing siege** that has led to a severe shortage of fuel and basic goods. This shortage directly affects the lives of residents, as roads are blocked and the movement of goods is prevented, making access to daily necessities extremely difficult.

In addition, electricity and water have been cut off for many residents of both neighborhoods, **rendering living conditions unbearable**.

Impact on the health and education sectors:

As a result of the siege and shortages of supplies, the only hospital in the neighborhood is facing a severe lack of fuel and medical equipment, putting patients' lives at risk, limiting the capacity of the healthcare sector to provide necessary care, and increasing rates of deaths and injuries.

The siege has also extended to the education sector, as students and teachers are unable to reach their schools. Consequently, the education sector is disrupted, and children are deprived of their fundamental right to education.



Violations:

- The Sheikh Maqsood and Al-Ashrafieh neighborhoods are subjected to systematic violations by armed factions affiliated with the transitional government. These violations include repeated shelling, a suffocating siege, and attacks on civilians. Such practices exacerbate the humanitarian situation and create an environment of fear and instability.
- Since **22 December 2025**, the two neighborhoods have been exposed to repeated bombardment using mortars, heavy machine guns, armed drones, artillery, and tanks. These attacks have been described as “**war crimes**” by human rights organizations.
- • On **22 December 2025**, a joint checkpoint of the Internal Security Forces (Asayish) and the General Security Forces at **Al-Sheihan Roundabout** in the city of Aleppo was subjected to an armed attack carried out by factions affiliated with the Ministry of Defense of the Interim Government. This was followed by heavy-weapons attacks on both neighborhoods, resulting in the deaths of **five people** and injuries to **23 civilians** with varying degrees of severity. The two neighborhoods also experienced a complete cutoff of water, electricity, and internet services, in addition to a shortage of diesel fuel. Armed factions continue to prevent the entry of food supplies, while simultaneously restricting the movement of residents into and out of the neighborhoods.
- • On **28 December 2025**, armed factions affiliated with the Ministry of Defense of the Interim Government abducted two university students from the Sheikh Maqsood and Al-Ashrafieh neighborhoods while they were returning to their home after finishing their university classes.
- • On the evening of **6 January 2026**, factions affiliated with the Interim Government launched a large-scale attack on the Sheikh Maqsood and Al-Ashrafieh neighborhoods in the city of Aleppo. These neighborhoods are home to more than **500,000 residents** (approximately **55,000 Kurdish families**, in addition to Kurdish IDPs displaced from the Afrin region, which is under the control of Turkey-backed factions).
- The attacks began with the targeting of civilians by forces affiliated with the Ministry of Defense using suicide drones, which initially resulted in **three civilians** sustaining critical injuries. This was followed by a campaign of indiscriminate shelling that targeted unarmed civilian neighborhoods. Division 60 deployed a column of tanks and armored vehicles in an attempt to forcibly enter the neighborhoods. This was accompanied by the forced eviction of civilians from surrounding areas adjacent to the Kurdish neighborhoods, in order to deploy snipers and position tanks within those areas—an extremely dangerous escalation that threatens the safety of civilians and turns a residential area into a military battlefield.

Accompanying the deployment of military reinforcements, a violent shelling campaign was carried out in which forces of the Ministry of Defense of the Interim Government used all types of heavy weapons, including **tanks, heavy artillery, Grad and Katyusha rocket launchers, mortars, and all types of Dushka machine guns**, in addition to attacks with suicide drones and other high-destruction weapons. This resulted in the **death of four civilians**, including **two women and a child**, and **35 others wounded**, including children. Dozens of homes and civilian buildings were also heavily damaged due to the impact of shells and rockets.

Subsequently, after intensive efforts to halt the clashes and return to dialogue, the Kurdish neighborhoods witnessed a cautious calm accompanied by a preliminary ceasefire agreement. However, these factions resumed **intense attacks on the three neighborhoods** shortly thereafter.

Amid the ongoing attacks and imposed siege, the neighborhoods continue to face a **severe humanitarian disaster**. Ambulance teams and medical personnel are unable to move to evacuate the wounded. There is also a shortage of doctors across all specialties, and armed factions are preventing doctors from outside the neighborhoods from entering.

• Since the morning of **Thursday, 8 January 2026**, indiscriminate shelling with artillery, mortars, and rocket launchers has continued on the Sheikh Maqsoud and Al-Ashrafieh neighborhoods from multiple directions, accompanied by large-scale military reinforcements and deployments, and continuous flights of suicide and reconnaissance drones.

- **Al-Bani Zaid neighborhood** was targeted with **two suicide drones**.
- The attack today began on the **Castello axis**, which was heavily targeted, although the attackers were unable to advance on the ground from any direction.
- Sniping operations against civilians were also reported today.
- Civilians who left the neighborhoods yesterday were subjected to **searches and mass arrests of young men**, under the pretext of belonging to Kurdish forces, with men separated from women.

Factions affiliated with the Ministry of Defense of the Interim Government announced a new deadline for civilians to leave the neighborhoods and a designated area in preparation for shelling. Meanwhile, even the crossings designated for civilian evacuation were subjected to shelling by the Ministry of Defense, from the **radio point controlled by government forces overlooking the Zohour Street crossing**.

The number of **documented victims** resulting from the heavy shelling of residential neighborhoods in Sheikh Maqsoud and Al-Ashrafieh has reached **71**, including **8 killed** and **63 wounded**, with the number expected to rise due to critical cases and the continuation of intense shelling.

- Until now, Damascus rejects all initiatives for de-escalation or holding meetings with our representatives proposed by international mediators to find a solution and calm the situation.
- The Syrian Ministry of Defense imposes a severe siege on the two neighborhoods, with the continued cutoff of electricity, food supplies, and diesel fuel, knowing that the majority of the neighborhood's residents have not left.

Names of civilians killed during the shelling of the two neighborhoods that began on the evening of 06.01.2025:

Names of the deceased:

- Fatima Hamadeh, 41 years old
- Masoud Faiq Abdo, 30 years old
- Child Khorshid Omar, 13 years old
- Child Sham Dallo, 3 years old
- Othman Ibrahim Masri
- Ramadan
- Hassan Mohamed Hassan, 42 years old
- An unidentified woman

Injured names:

	Name	Age		Name	Age
1	Ivan Abdo	2 years	2	Hamoude Hassan Mahmoud	17 years
3	Sharif Sido	52 yeras	4	Aslan Bakr	18 years
5	Mohammad Habib	87 years	6	Ali Aslan Muslim Bilal	17 years
7	Sharvan Abdo Mamo	17 years	8	Hassan Mohamad Eid Qatran	30 years
9	Mohammad Sheikh Kelo	70 years	10	Ramzi Keli	18 years
11	Hamada Hussien Bakr	23 years	12	Khadija Aloush	47 years
13	Shero Mohammad Hussien	44 years	14	Mohammad Nour Shobk	26 years
15	Mohammad Ibesh	21	16	Mohammad Habash	74 years
17	Ibrahim Mohammad Rashed	34 years	18	Hevin Omar	29 years
19	Dema Hussien	82 years	20	Mostafa Abid Al Hamed Hassa	38 years
21	Arslan Alo	7 years	22	Refaat Mohammad Alo	64 years
23	Masoud Ali Karkour	18 years	24	Abid Al aAziz dawoud	24 years
25	Rajab Abid Alfattah	16 years	26	Nouri khalil	29 years
27	George Khawam (christian)	42 years	28	Nouri jamal hussien	34 years

29	Jihad saleh nasser	15 years	30	DIbrin hamdoush	45 years
31	Mohammad zakaria mardali		32	Orhan samo	
33	Mohammad saleh al maleh	75 years	34	Abdullah mohammad saleh al maleh	26 years
35	Ahmad badr aldin zaidan	5years	36	Rashal rotto	26 years
37	Daughter of ahmad badr aldin zaidan	6 years	38	Son of ahmad badir aldin zaidan	7 years
39	Abdullah mohammad hassan mohammad	8 years	40	Mizgen ali	30 years
41	Gulistan mohammad	41 years	42	Rahaf hassan	9 years
43	Hala hamza	13 years	44	Weam hamza	6 years
45	Omar rashed qablan	44 years	46	Joudi salah saed	23 years
47	Mohammad hamdi	5years	48	Janiar habib	12 years
49	Lina al taweel	22 years	50	Muslim mohammad faek	22 years
51	Basil sharif ali		52	Mohammad ibrahim	12 years
53	Hanifa ibrahim	4 years	54	Dalil mohammad kolesh	37 years
55	Jamil abid al salam razouk	54 years	56	Ahmad mohammad mohammad	24 y
57	Hamza yehya banawe	18 years	58	Ahmad abid al ghane	65 years
59	Salmo razouk	55 years	60	Huda othman	
61	Khaled razouk	25 years	62	Enda othman	12 years
63	Khalil fawze hajik mahmoud	17 years			

Foreign Relations Department in North and East Syria

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